



May 8, 2025

**Annual State of Biodefense
and
Astrobiodefense: Biological Threats and the Next Frontier**

OBJECTIVE

Provide the Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense with a better understanding of: (1) current governmental astrobiodefense efforts; (2) new scientific and technological advances for astrobiodefense; and (3) collaborative efforts and public-private partnerships to improve astrobiodefense.

SCHEDULE

10:00 – 10:10 am **Opening Remarks**

10:10 – 11:10 am **Panel One: Annual State of Biodefense**
Executive Director of the Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense will address biological threats to the Nation for 2025 and into the future.

Asha M. George, DrPH
Executive Director, Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense

11:10 am – 12:25 pm **Panel Two: NASA and Planetary Protection**
Government officials will discuss ongoing planetary protection efforts by NASA to strengthen astrobiodefense.

James D. Polk, DO
Chief Health and Medical Officer, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

J. Nick Benardini, PhD
Planetary Protection Officer, 2021-present, Office of Safety and Mission Assurance, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

12:25 – 12:55 pm **Lunch**

12:55 – 2:10 pm **Panel Three: Private Sector Contributions**
Industry and academic representatives will discuss astrobiodefense activities in the private sector and opportunities for government policy.

Robert E. Lindberg, Jr., ScD

Independent Consultant; Member, Committee on Planetary Protection, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Trista J. Vick-Majors, PhD

Assistant Professor, Biological Sciences, Michigan Technological University

Anne Cheever, PhD

Technology and Security Policy Fellow, RAND Corporation

2:10– 2:20 pm **Break**

2:20 – 3:35 pm **Panel Four: Science and Technology Crossover**

Experts will address how science and technology innovations for space and planetary protection can be applied to improve biodefense capabilities on Earth.

Michael A. Meyer, PhD

Former Lead Scientist, Mars Exploration Program, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Christopher E. Carr, ScD

Assistant Professor, Daniel Guggenheim School of Aerospace Engineering, & School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Georgia Institute of Technology; Research Fellow, Massachusetts General Hospital Molecular Biology

Cassie Conley, PhD

Former NASA Planetary Protection Officer, 2006-2017

3:35 – 3:40 pm **Closing Remarks**

3:40 pm **Adjourn**